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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [SMIG](#) [ZI](#) [MZ](#)
SUBJECT: ZIMBABWEANS IN MANICA CANNOT AFFORD TO GO HOME

REF: A. MAPUTO 615
[B](#). 08 MAPUTO 616
[C](#). 08 MAPUTO 546

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Todd C. Chapman, Reasons 1.4(b+d)

[1](#). (C) Summary: Extending along much of Zimbabwe's eastern border, Manica Province has been the recipient of a wave of Zimbabwean refugees, as well as a higher-than-average incidence of cholera over the past year. Currently, refugees are fewer and the effects of the cholera outbreak earlier this year have largely dissipated, but problems remain. During a June 22 visit to the city of Manica, the Charge stopped by a local market where many of the "Zimbabwean visitors" both work and live. Since rampant inflation has rendered Zimbabwean dollars valueless, they eke out an uneasy existence in Manica, unable to scrape together enough "USAs" to go home. End Summary.

LOCAL OFFICIALS PAINT A ROSY PICTURE

[2](#). (C) Officials from Manica Mayor Mogueue Candieiro's staff, as well as provincial Governor Mauricio Vieira during a separate visit in Chimoio, described the situation of Zimbabwean visitors as well under control (Note: the GRM policy maintains that there are no Zimbabwean refugees in Mozambique--rather, they are only short-term visitors. End note). Still, neither office could contradict informal estimates that as many as 10,000 Zimbabweans remain (Note: In 2008, a UNHCR representative estimated that Zimbabweans in Mozambique numbered some 200,000. End Note.) A Manica politician told the Charge that the Zimbabweans were attending city schools and receiving social assistance--Cimanica, spoken in Manica, and Cishona, spoken in Zimbabwe, are mutually intelligible. The politician also suggested (somewhat unconvincingly) that, although prostitution was not uncommon, Zimbabwean women uniformly insisted that all patrons wear condoms, so there were few resulting health issues. A recent article in national newspaper Savana indicated that Zimbabwean prostitutes are undercutting local prices, generating complaints.

REFUGEES NOT AS SANGUINE

[3](#). (C) Walking through the so-called "Zimbabwean market" in Manica town, the Charge heard from refugees that although poverty is the main reason they remain, many also fear being attacked for having supported Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai. While Mozambicans have been relatively supportive hosts, one refugee said that her family had been harassed by drunken soldiers who had kicked her sleeping daughter in the head. A carpenter said he had managed to return briefly to Harare, but could find no work there, and

so, along with his apprentice, found himself back in Manica. As is the case with prostitution, skilled tradesmen from Zimbabwe are undercutting locals, causing friction. One man clutched a scale; he said he charged the occasional customer a few cents to weigh himself. The Zimbabweans said they lacked blankets, running water and the most basic of necessities. In the middle of the school day, children were seen running about the market. Without exception, residents expressed no interest in staying in Mozambique and explained they only wished to acquire enough hard currency to return.

COMMENT: AN UNEASY STASIS

14. (C) Mozambique, as one of the poorest countries in the world, has neither the financial nor the medical resources to assist effectively the Zimbabweans currently attempting to scratch out a living in Manica, though the situation is not ameliorated by the GRM's continued stance that Zimbabweans living in Mozambique are not refugees, rather they are only temporary visitors. If conditions at home improve and they can find the means, the refugees will return to Zimbabwe. For the moment, both Mozambicans and Zimbabweans seem willing to tolerate the status quo.

AMANI